



# Psychology

Advanced GCE A2 7876

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS 3876

# **Report on the Units**

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# CONTENTS

# Advanced GCE Psychology (7876) Advanced Subsidiary GCE Psychology (3876)

# **REPORT ON THE UNITS**

Unit/Content	Page
2540 Core Studies 1	1
2541 Core Studies 2	3
2542 Psychological Investigations	5
2543 Psychological Research Report	8
2544 Psychology and Education	10
2545 Psychology and Health	12
2546 Psychology and Organisations	15
2547 Psychology and Environment	17
2548 Psychology and Sport	19
2549 Psychology and Crime	21
Grade Thresholds	23

# 2540 Core Studies 1

### General Comments.

In general this paper resulted in a full distribution of marks and it discriminated well over the whole cohort. However there was a marked centre effect with some candidates better prepared for the exam than others, showing sound knowledge and understanding of the core studies, whilst other answers lacked detail and clarity. There were few candidates, this session failing to answer the full 20 questions. This was pleasing, but there were still some candidates failing to link their answers to the core study identified in the question. This was a marked centre effect. There were common mistakes in candidate's miss-reading the written word, thus not allowing them to gain full marks in that question. It was pleasing to note that most candidates recognised the requirements of the injunctions and answered correctly, though some did give longer answers than necessary to the injunction 'identify'. Most candidates had used their time wisely and there was little evidence of not being able to finish the paper.

#### Comments on individual questions.

Q1 The question was well answered on the whole though weaker candidates appeared to think Washoe lived totally with the Gardners and was fed at their table in a high chair with regular nappy changes.

Q2 Good answers related to the verbalisation of the conclusion related to the table. Weaker candidates gave 'findings' instead of 'conclusions '.

Q3 Well answered, with candidates gaining full marks by illustrating their chosen ethical issue with an example from the study.

Q4 This question required an accurate explanation which was common, but weaker candidates gave a description of the method rather than concentration on the answers given by the children.

Q5 Poorly identified features of the sample of which there were 4 possible answers gaining full marks, however common answers included 'children', 'mixed gender', and 'from the same school'.

Q6 Surprisingly this was not a well answered question, candidates wrote vaguely about teacher/parent observation/questionnaires/ratings instead of emphasising that ratings, were given on a 5 point scale by nursery teachers prior to the study.

Q7 this question discriminated well and good answers gave a suggestion which was related well to the findings.

Q8 Well prepared candidates gave excellent answers whilst those who were not gave answers which concentrated on 'horses with large penises'.

Q9 Good answers identified and explained the two components of the theory.

Q10 This was a testing question requiring identification of the findings (not the conclusions).

Q11 Well answered, linking the difficulties of generalisation directly to the Sperry study thus gaining full marks.

Q12 The question asked for differences which did not include the temporal lobe. Some candidates confused the hypothalamus with the hippocampus.

Q13 This question was only answered well by the better prepared candidates who correctly described the advertising element followed by the selection of volunteers that included a range of ages, occupations and educational levels.

Q14 A common mistake was to misread the **physical features** and give what seemed like preprepared answers to a different question.

Q15a Well answered.

b Full marks needed a comparison element with a real prison.

Q16 Well answered by most candidates.

Q17 Only the good candidates could relate the question to 'testing IQ in 'today's society'.

Q18 The question asked for questions related to 'racial preference' in particular, many candidates gave questions from the 8 listed in the study.

Q19 Well answered those who related the strengths to the study received full marks.

Q20a the most popular answer was 'ink blot test', few gave 'a projective test' to gain full marks.

Q20b On the whole a well answered question.

# 2541 Core Studies 2

# **General Comments**

It is pleasing to report that overall examiners felt the standard was higher than in previous sessions. However unfortunately there are still far too many candidates making rubric errors by answering either all 4 questions or, in Section A considering all 3 studies, and/or in Section B concentrating on 1 study rather than all the 4 named studies.

Candidates found the paper accessible in terms of the themes and issues to be considered. The majority had grasped the requirements of the questions, particularly in respect of structure of the answers. However many did not do themselves justice in terms of the marks gained because, although knowledge was generally sound, the application of that knowledge was less so.

In Section A, there was an approximate balance between the number of candidates answering Question 1 and Question 2, whereas in Section B the vast majority of candidates answered Question 3 with very few attempting Question 4.

The following may be of use to both teachers and candidates:

Firstly, candidates should ensure that they:

- Head and reference the exam paper correctly on their answer booklets. Too many candidates fail to enter either their correct candidate number and/or their name is illegible.
- Maintain the same writing style throughout the script. Several candidates changed their writing significantly at some point in their paper.
- Do not use TIPPEX in any part of their answer booklet. This is against examination regulations.
- Write legibly at all times, even as they near the end of their script. There were several scripts which were almost indecipherable.

**Secondly,** for Section A questions, it is essential that candidates read all question parts before choosing which core study to write about. It is the choice of issue that should determine which question is answered rather than the core study. For example there is little point choosing ' the Hraba and Grant question' if nothing is known about self-report measures (as was required in this session). 6 marks may be gained by writing about the Hraba and Grant study and how self-reports were used, but 12 marks may be lost if two general strengths and two general weaknesses are not known about self-report measures.

**Thirdly,** part (b) of all four questions requires candidates to "provide a general strength/weakness related to the question. They should give an example from their chosen study/any of the 4 named studies, to illustrate the strength/weakness, and they should comment about the strength/weakness which may be an evaluation or implication." Frequently candidates fail to "discuss" as requested and/or write study specific responses rather than generally applicable points.

**Fourthly,** candidates need to follow the requirements of the mark scheme for Section A part (c). Many candidates assume that the implications of their chosen suggestion (increased ecological validity, reduced demand characteristics, reduced experimenter effects, etc.) is really the 'effect on results', when it is not.

# **Comments on Specific Questions**

### **Question 1**

This question on self-report measures asked in part (a) for candidates to describe how selfreport data was gathered in their chosen study. Although most candidates answered this well, many failed to score marks because responses lacked detail, often giving only brief details of 'questionnaires' or 'interviews'. Part (b) required candidates to provide two strengths and two weaknesses of using self-report measures. Here candidates showed confusion and lack of understanding of the term self-report measures, with many not understanding that questionnaires, surveys and interviews are all self-report measures. Candidates therefore lost marks for such suggestions as 'a strength of self-report methods is that they are a quick and easy way to gather data', because one cannot say that the interview method as used by Thigpen and Cleckley was quick and easy! Question part (c) produced interesting and usually appropriate suggestions though these were rarely fully developed and very few candidates were able to gain more than 4 marks as they were unable to suggest how their change might have affected the results.

### **Question 2**

Here candidates were asked in question Part (a) to describe how the experimental method was used in their chosen study. This required candidates to identify that their chosen study was a laboratory experiment. This meant that in both the Bandura and Samuel and Bryant studies there were IV's and DV's which needed identifying and explaining. There was no IV or DV in Dement and Kleitman because it was a correlational study. However all three studies involved rigid procedures and numerous controls which needed identifying and explaining. Overall many candidates scored well on this part of the question though others gave vague answers that lacked detail. For Part (b), most candidates were able to identify two strengths and two weaknesses of the experimental method though the supporting examples were often inappropriate or poorly explained and there were rarely any acceptable comments. Part (c) again saw candidates failing to answer fully the second half of the question.

#### **Question 3**

In question Part (a) candidates who described how data was gathered in all 4 studies, gave examples of what data was gathered, and said where the data was gathered in relation to an every-day setting, scored highly. Many candidates failed to identify where the data was gathered e.g. Rosenhan (in the psychiatric wards of 11 American hospitals), Piliavin (on the New York subway), Freud (in Little Hans' home), Deregowski (from the villages and schools of different tribes in Africa and the Western world). Answers to Part (b) were equivalent to the Part (b) of other questions and typically concentrated on issues such as lack of control, ecological validity, difficulties in recording behaviour, and ethical problems.

#### **Question 4**

Very few candidates answered this question and those who did gave either very good answers or very poor answers. The majority of candidates who did tackle this question showed good knowledge of the studies but little, if any, understanding of the term 'reductionism'. Question part (a) required candidates to describe how a reductionist approach had been used in the four named studies. Few candidates were able to describe how behaviour had been reduced or what it had been reduced to, and even those who did, rarely supported their statements with appropriate evidence. For Part (b) candidates were generally able to identify two advantages and two disadvantages of the reductionist approach but were unable to support their suggestions with appropriate evidence or make adequate comments about their suggestions.

# **2542 Psychological Investigations**

# **General Comments**

Most candidates were able to attempt most questions on the paper and few candidates seemed to struggle to complete the questions in the time allowed. However, some candidates did not exercise appropriate time management along the way and devoted more time to some questions than they should, meaning that responses to some questions later in the paper seemed a little rushed. It was also noticeable where centres had taken the time to prepare candidates for the full range of possible question themes using the details provided in the specification. These candidates, inevitably, were better able to respond to the more challenging questions and provide a more detailed response. Some candidates seemed to rely too much on their folder, resorting to copying out complete sections in response to questions that did not always correspond exactly to what the question had asked for.

# **Comments on Individual Questions**

# **SECTION A**

Q1 Describe the sampling method used to select the participants for this study. [2] Many candidates here simply described some key features of the sample, rather than describing the process by which such individuals were recruited.

Q2 Outline one strength and one weakness of this sampling method. [4] Once again, some candidates did not respond directly to the question and discussed strengths and weaknesses of the sample rather than the sampling method.

# Q3 (a) Suggest an alternative sample of participants that may have been used for your investigation. [2]

Most candidates were able to suggest an alternative sample to the one already used, although some simply made suggestions to increase the sample size, rather than changes to the actual composition of the sample.

# SECTION B

Q4 Describe how you investigated the aim of your observation. [4] Candidates often failed to produce enough detail in this question to allow for full replication, missing out some vital details, such as the exact place and duration of the observation.

Q5 Suggest two improvements that could be made to the way that your observation was carried out and outline the possible effect of each of these improvements on your observation. [6] The improvements that were suggested were sometimes superficial and lacked detail (e.g. simply 'observe for longer'). Sometimes candidates failed to comment on the possible effects of their suggested improvements, and those that did often provided only general comments which were not in the context of their own specific investigation.

Q6 Outline one strength and one weakness of using observational methods. [4] Most candidates responded to this question well and were able to offer appropriate strengths and weaknesses of the observational method.

# **SECTION C**

#### Q7 (a) What is meant by an 'independent measures design'? [2]

Some candidates were clearly not prepared for this question and showed little or no understanding of the concept of experimental designs. Many focused on basic aspects of the procedure and some omitted the question completely. Some even suggested that it meant 'doing an experiment only once' (whereas a repeated measures design involved 'repeating the experiment at a later date')

Q7 (b) What is meant by a 'repeated measures design'? [2] If candidates struggled to answer the previous question they found this one just as demanding.

#### Q8 Outline the design used for your investigation. [2]

Candidates who had problems understanding the concept of experimental design in questions 7(a) and 7(b) struggled to produce anything creditworthy here. Many simply described the general features of their procedure, and in doing so were sometimes fortuitous to include enough information to ascertain whether independent or repeated measures had been employed. However, this was not always the case and in many instances it was not possible to categorically conclude which design had been implemented.

Q9 Outline one advantage and one disadvantage of using this design for your investigation. [6] Once again, if candidates did not have sufficient understanding of the concept of experimental designs generally, they struggled here, with many simply commenting on some advantages and disadvantages of their procedure in general. More knowledgeable candidates were able to discuss the associated advantages and disadvantages of the experimental design they employed in the context of their own specific activity (e.g. commenting that the use of an independent measures design in a memory test may have been prone to the confounding variable of individual differences, with some people simply having a better memory than others, regardless of whether a memory aid was being used or not).

### **SECTION D**

### Q10 State the null hypothesis for your activity. [3]

Most candidates were able to state their null hypothesis correctly and clearly. However, some candidates made directional statements ('there will not be a positive correlation').

#### Q11 Sketch a scattergraph of your results. [3]

Most candidates attempted a sketch of their results in a scattergraph. However, the labelling of axes was sometimes completely missing; or poor; and units of measurement were not always included. A minority of candidates incorrectly presented participant numbers along the abscissa (or 'x' axis).

# Q12 (a) Outline the conclusion that you reached in relation to your hypotheses. [3] A considerable number of candidates failed to offer any conclusion and simply justified how the data had been analysed (a response better suited to question 12(b).

Q12 (b) Explain how you analysed your data in order to reach this conclusion. [3] Candidates now seem well versed in reciting how they analysed their data using inferential statistics. However some answers still lack a genuine understanding of calculated and critical values and probability levels (with some confusing probability levels with table critical values).

# 2543 Psychological Research Report

# **General comments**

Most centres have taken time and care in the supervision of the practical project and the assignment. Most centres have ensured that candidates submitted work within the maximum word limits but there was an increase in the number of candidates who submitted work that exceeded the word limit, sometimes by significant numbers of words. There is a maximum of 1400 words for the practical project and 1000 words for the written assignment. Candidates are disadvantaged when they submit work that exceeds these maximum word limits. Centres should also continue to warn candidates against plagiarism and to guard against 'cutting and pasting' information from the Internet.

Most investigations conformed to ethical guidelines and most included proposal forms with the reports. Centres should remind candidates that they must comply with provisos suggested by the advisor and that within class sets candidates are expected to investigate their own individual hypotheses. Greater understanding of the research process was shown where candidates submitted practical projects that clearly reflected their own interest.

In the written assignment most candidates found a suitable source, usually a newspaper or magazine article and most identified appropriate issues or assumptions and went beyond the core studies to relate their issues/assumptions to apposite psychological research. Centres should remind candidates that each candidate in a class set is required to have their own unique source and that the original source should be attached to the submitted work. Candidates generally received appropriate guidance in the selection of their source articles but centres should advise candidates not to select sources that depict graphical scenarios of violent/disturbing events and examiners continue to raise concerns regarding the necessity of reading 'dozens' of such articles.

### Comments on individual parts of the report

### The practical project

Reports for the practical project almost always followed the standard format. Most centres were aware of the requirements of the practical project and appeared to have given appropriate levels of guidance and supervision to candidates.

The abstracts were usually clear and concise.

Most candidates provided well written **background information**, quoted appropriate psychological research and provided a rationale for their **research aim and hypotheses**. However some candidates gave very brief psychological background and/or failed to show how quoted research related to their aim or hypotheses. Some candidates did not operationalise their hypotheses. It should be clear from an operationalised hypothesis exactly what is being 'manipulated' and what is being 'measured'.

Most candidates wrote **methodology sections** that were clear and replicable. Unfortunately some candidates omit important materials and many do not describe their sample and/or how participants were selected. Candidates should be reminded that it is best not to name their centre in the methodology or the discussion section as this is a breach of confidentiality. Candidates could also be advised not to 'waste words' in the methodology section by repeating information, under separate headings, on controls and ethical guidelines that they have described elsewhere.

**The results section** is one in which few candidates score full marks. While many candidates do present data clearly and do provide appropriate analysis many candidates do not use appropriate visual diagrams or demonstrate clear understanding of their findings. Pie charts are the best way to depict nominal data and bar charts or frequency diagrams for ordinal data. Some candidates continue to produce many charts all showing the same information in different formats which demonstrates a lack of understanding. The most frequent error was the inappropriate use of Chi-squared tests. To demonstrate their understanding candidates should be encouraged to comment on their data beyond a basic statement of significance. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the level of data, and how they plan to analyse the data, when designing their investigation.

**The discussion section** continued to clearly discriminate between candidates who applied evaluative points to their research and who understood the weaknesses/strengths of their method / sample and/or the improvements they could have made. Weaker candidates tended to produce a list of points that were not always explained or justified in terms of their research project.

**Presentation and communication** was for most candidates good. References were usually supplied but many candidates did not reference the source of their statistical test, or the computer program, used to calculate their statistical analysis.

### The assignment

Most **sources** selected were appropriate for the task and in line with the recommendations of the specification, in terms of both the date of publication (within two years of the examination), and in the length; (not more than two pages of 'tabloid' or three pages of A4 where internet sites are used). Centres should remind candidates that the selection of sources describing torture, rape, murder, and the like, is potentially distressing for both the candidate and the examiner. Centres could direct candidates to less distressing sources, especially when there is a tendency to treat these human tragedies superficially.

For strong candidates the **issues** were clearly identified, and were appropriately related to the source and to psychological evidence. Weaker candidates did not identify the issues clearly and/or raised issues unrelated to the source. Centres might assist candidates by reminding them that every mention of ethnicity does not always raise an issue of ethnocentrism (Tajfel), and that every mention of violence does not always relate to Social Learning theory (Bandura).

In the **evidence** section most candidates described appropriate or apposite psychological evidence and explained how this evidence was related to the source / issue raised. That said, while evidence from the Internet is acceptable, there was an increase in the amount of anecdotal or 'pop' psychology quoted. Centres might remind candidates that it is not acceptable to 'cut and paste' evidence from any source without quotation marks and the appropriate references.

In the **application section**, the strongest suggestions were specific and pragmatic, supported by psychological theory or research and related to the situation depicted in the source. Weaker candidates offered vague suggestions that were not always grounded in psychology. Candidates clearly demonstrated their understanding by making evaluative comments explaining how or why their suggestions may or may not 'help'.

In many cases **presentation and communication** could have been improved. Candidates could be reminded that this is a psychological assignment and encouraged to use appropriate terminology and to 'spell and grammar check' their final submissions. Most candidates referenced their work appropriately but candidates could be reminded that full references are required, not just a bibliography.

# **2544 Psychology and Education**

# **General Comments**

There was a good spread of marks on this paper with some marked centre effects. Many centres have clearly prepared their candidates well and guided the Section B part (b) answers to be structured around the evaluative issues. A number of candidates, however, performed less well on Section A part (b), particularly in question 1 where the injunction was to compare. This presented difficulties and many students were unable to get above the bottom band of the marks.

There was an uneven split between the questions: 1 (improving motivation) was more popular than 2 (preventing disruptive behaviour) and in Section B 3 (special educational needs) was chosen by fewer candidates than 4 (design and layout). Section A part b in questions 1 and 2 clearly discriminates between candidates with only the very strongest showing the ability to engage with the question, raising and applying relevant points. However, the majority of candidates managed to identify some points. Similarly in questions 3 and 4 part b the majority of candidates could identify relevant issues with which to evaluate the research and theory described in part a but many were unable to provide effective analysis.

Overall, stronger responses to questions were characterised by clear identification and description of actual research studies and theories; weaker answers, although rarely drifting to anecdotal evidence, tended to rely on platitudes or general reference to "research has found that...." or commonly crediting everything to Le Francois.

# **Comments on individual questions**

**1 a)** This was a popular question and candidates were able to identify one way to improve the motivation of pupils. These were commonly placed in the context of behavioural, cognitive or humanistic approaches. A popular response described meeting the basic needs of pupils through breakfast clubs etc and using this in the context of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. There was some confusion in the use of Lepper and Green's study to support the use of extrinsic reinforcement whereas the conclusion of the study is to use intrinsic motivation. A few candidates appeared to ignore the word one and described a number of ways.

**1 b)** Answers to this question were very varied. At the top end, the candidates displayed detailed knowledge of a range of ways to improve motivation and were able to pick out a number of points of comparison. Although most candidates had a good understanding of the topic, many of them answered this part with description of more ways to improve motivation showing very little attempt to compare them. Candidates who described theories without making comparisons could not achieve higher than 4 marks.

**2 a)** Like question 1a, this was fairly well answered with a number of candidates describing a strategy to prevent disruptive behaviour in detail and showing understanding of its use in an educational setting. Many candidates referred to the benefits of preventing disruptive behaviour through the use of operant conditioning principles to encourage appropriate behaviour. Other responses focused on techniques such as self-instructional training.

**2 b)** This part of the question was answered much better than 1 part b as most candidates found it fairly straightforward to write about usefulness. However, some answers became anecdotal and focused on how it would be useful to teachers and students without exploring wider issues such as reductionism, ethnocentrism etc.

**3 a)** Although this question was less popular than question 4, some candidates answered this very well and could accurately recall details of different types of special educational needs including autistic, dyslexic and gifted students. Very few candidates achieve 4 marks for evidence as their responses either lack sufficient depth or breadth. Candidates need to describe about four pieces of evidence across the range of topics, to include strategies for educating children with special needs.

**3 b)** Some candidates gave excellent, effective answers although other candidates carried on describing more details of special educational needs rather than evaluating the material they had described in part a. However, most candidates knew that they were required to give detailed analysis with comparisons and contrasts using three or four issues linked to psychological evidence. These candidates made a reasonable attempt at evaluating the research using issues such as individual differences, reductionism, generalisability and validity.

**3 c)** This was answered adequately with a number of candidates answering very well. Many candidates made use of the pros and cons of mainstream versus specialist schooling for children with special needs. Some candidates referred to support for gifted children through enrichment versus acceleration.

**4** a) This was the more popular of the two section B questions and many candidates gave good, accurate, detailed answers. To get full marks in this part of the question candidates need to describe a wide range of psychological evidence which might include studies of arrangement of desks, noise, temperature, colour and the use of wall space.

**4 b)** There were some good answers to this question, but like 3b, some candidates followed on from 4a with more description of research rather than evaluation. Good answers provided a wide range of evaluative issues which were closely linked to psychological research which was analysed effectively. Weaker answers tended to be more descriptive.

**4 c)** This part of the question was well answered by many candidates who had some appropriate suggestions for a new sixth form centre. Although diagrams do not normally gain much credit, in this answer a few of the candidates' sketches provided additional explanation for the suggestions made.

# 2545 Psychology and Health

# **General Comments**

Overall this paper was successful in eliciting the full range of marks; it allowed for knowledgeable and well prepared candidates to demonstrate what they had learned about Psychology and Health whilst also distinguishing between these candidates and those who were less knowledgeable or prepared. There was approximately an equal split between the questions in Section A: 1 (Health and Safety) and 2 (Substance abuse), but significantly more candidates opted for question 3 (Pain) than question 4 (Lifestyles and Health behaviour). There were some clear general patterns noted by examiners which are worthy of mention here. Questions 1 and 2 parts (b) clearly discriminate between candidates with only the very strongest candidates showing the ability to engage with the question, raising and applying relevant points. The majority of candidates managed to identify some points but failed to make them truly relevant to the question. Similarly in questions 3 and 4 part (b) the majority of candidates could identify relevant issues with which to evaluate the research and theory described in part (a) but fewer were able to address all aspects of the evaluation to warrant top marks on each of the markscheme criteria. In a similar vein, answers to questions 3 and 4 part (c) tended to be polarised: Many candidates were well prepared for the demands of these questions and clearly offered their suggestions which they backed up with evidence and well explained psychological rationale. Weaker candidates tended to offer answers which were purely descriptive and often anecdotal.

# **Comments on the Individual Questions**

### Question 1

Part (a) required candidates to describe one study which investigates reducing accidents and promoting safety behaviour. Many poor responses were seen by examiners, to this question, where candidates failed to even identify an appropriate study or indeed offer a study at all. A common error here was to describe a study which investigated the causes of accidents or even the concept of an accident prone personality, rather than addressing the question which asked for reducing accidents and promoting safety behaviour. Essentially good answers offered a detailed, accurate and well organised description of a study, which made clear how the findings explain how accidents can be reduced and safety behaviours promoted. Weaker answers tended to either describe a relevant study but fail to make the connection between the description and reducing accidents or failed to describe a study at all: candidates who did this limited themselves to the lower mark band. Some excellent answers to this demanding question were seen by examiners where the candidates gave a clear account of a study from a psychological perspective, demonstrating a clear understanding. Some candidates had clearly confused Health and Safety with Health Promotion in response to this question.

Part (b) required candidates to discuss the validity of studies which investigate reducing accidents and promoting safety behaviour. It was encouraging to note candidates who were able to answer this question by addressing a number of key points such as the challenge of obtaining valid data by considering the various methods available to psychologists. Other effective arguments considered the ecological validity of various studies and the methods they employed. Weaker answers either completely failed to address the question or only did so by default as they used the Section B part b approach to evaluating evidence which failed to attract many marks. The very best answers were supported with examples and used psychological terminology; they clearly demonstrated an understanding of validity. Weaker answers tended to list points and attempt to apply them to evidence which may or may not have been presented in part (a). This attracted little credit from the mark scheme as it essentially failed to answer the question.

# Question 2

### Part (a)

Answers included number of different theories of substance abuse. The most frequently offered included the nicotine regulation model, social learning theory, behaviourist approaches such as conditioning and medical/ biological theories. Other less well documented theories were occasionally noted but regardless of the theory presented, the credit given to an answer was determined by the clarity of the outline and the extent to which the description was from a psychological perspective. Those answers receiving the highest marks were detailed, well organised and showed clear understanding. A very common error in response to this question was to offer a study when a theory had been requested in the question; such a response limited answers to the bottom mark band.

# Part (b)

Candidates were required to assess the usefulness of theories of substance abuse. Candidates who demonstrated a clear understanding of the issue of usefulness and were able to illustrate it in the context of theories of substance abuse tended to construct effective answers. Some of the significant issues raised related to the extent to which theories help to provide an understanding of substance abuse and the ways in which it can be prevented or treated. Strong answers explored the strengths and weaknesses of a number of theories in relation to their usefulness. Weaker answers tended to consider only one technique and/or fail to address the issue of validity. The very best answers offered a good range of points relating to the validity of pain measurement techniques with confident use of psychological terms and concepts. A coherent, thorough and clearly explained answer which clearly demonstrated the meaning of validity in this context received the higher band marks.

The majority of candidates selecting this question were able to offer relevant concepts, terminology and evidence to the area of Pain. Many different combinations of evidence were successfully presented to achieve full marks in section (a). It was not necessary to cover all three sub-sections of the specification in order to provide a suitable answer due to the openness of the question. Nonetheless those candidates who did present evidence covering the three areas frequently did so very effectively.

The answers to part (b) of this question which required candidates to evaluate what psychologists have discovered about Pain produced, in general one of two responses: by far the most common response was to consider a range of issues such as validity, ethics, usefulness and so on, and how these impinged on the research presented in section (a). A less common approach was to take a less structured strategy to analysing and evaluating the research. In both instances however the most credit went to answers which clearly identified, explained and made relevant the issues in the context of Pain and the research carried out in this area. As in previous sessions, there were a number of candidates who failed to appreciate the demands of this section of the question by simply offering more description. A number of candidates/ centres still appear to be unaware of the requirements of this section which is of concern as poor performance in this section had drastic consequences for some otherwise strong candidates.

Part (c) was on the whole answered extremely well with the majority of candidates able to offer appropriate techniques to measure the effectiveness of a new painkiller. The strongest answers supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained the reasons for their suggestions using clear psychological rationale. This part of the question offered candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to apply psychology to a situation. An impressive number of candidates demonstrated the ability to do this effectively.

A number of candidates however failed to access the higher marks either because they failed to support their suggestions with any psychological evidence or rationale. Essentially these weaker responses were anecdotal.

#### Question 4

The open nature of the question allowed for a wide range of evidence and pieces of research to be offered and indeed an impressive range of theories, explanations and appropriate studies of Lifestyle and Health behaviours were presented by the majority of candidates. There were some weak answers to this question, which tended to offer predominantly anecdotal evidence and fail to address the key concepts of this area of the specification. Many candidates incorporated elements from different areas of the specification; the success with which they did this varied enormously, with some candidates applying evidence appropriately to the issue of lifestyles and health behaviour, while others merely listed any piece of health psychology they could recall. The latter strategy was needless to say ineffective.

The points outlined in relation to question 3 part (b) are again relevant here. The strongest answers raised, explained and made relevant a number of issues which they went on to evaluate in relation to the evidence presented in part (a). Only the very strongest candidates demonstrated the ability to offer analysis in the form of comparisons and contrasts between the issues as applied to the evidence presented. Equally only the very best answers contextualised their analysis and evaluation within the context of Lifestyles and Health behaviour thus making the answer truly meaningful, relevant and impressive. In some cases argument structure was weak, often as a result of candidates failing to present a meaningful answer to the question.

There were many appropriate answers to part (c). The majority of candidates offered good suggestions as to why a student would choose an apple in preference to a chocolate bar. Many candidates successfully applied Health belief models and theories such as the theory of planned behaviour to support their suggestions with evidence and provide rationale. The answers attracting the most credit were those which supported their suggestions with appropriate evidence and explained it using psychological rationale and terminology. Once again it was pleasing to note a number of candidates who demonstrated an impressive ability to apply psychology in a given situation. The very best answers had considered the target of a student on their way home from school and tailored their suggestions accordingly. Weak answers were essentially anecdotal and unsupported by psychological evidence or rationale. A few candidates miss-read the question and explained why the student chose the chocolate rather than the apple. In these incidences it was not possible for full marks to be awarded although the rationale and quality of the psychology of the answer was credited where appropriate. Once again candidates must be urged to read the question carefully.

### General points.

Candidates should be clear on the difference between a study and a theory. If only one study or theory is requested only one should be offered, giving more than one is a waste of their time. A large number of scripts were seen this session which were almost or actually illegible. Centres should refer to access arrangements with regard to this issue. Similarly many candidates failed to complete the front of their answer booklet with the question numbers they had answered.

# **2546 Psychology and Organisations**

# **General Comments**

The performance of the candidates in this section showed some understanding of psychology as applied to organisations. However many candidates did not always relate general psychological theory to the specific topic of organisations. Candidates tended to be less well prepared than in previous years to write in detail in Section B, consequently there appeared to be fewer high quality papers.

Candidates showed an equal tendency to answer questions in section A but more candidates opted to answer question 3 in section B. There was little to choose between the candidates' general performance on each of the four questions

# **Comments on Individual Questions**

Q1 This question asked for a study into temporal effects in the work place, and this lead to some confusion where candidates wrote about the effects of temperature rather than time/shift patterns. Candidates who answered this question correctly identified a study and wrote in detail. Candidates should remember that there are results and conclusions to the description of a study.

The concept of usefulness was less well explored, with many candidates writing variations on lack of usefulness due to individual differences, in job types, individuals, management types, all of which were creditworthy but lacked some breadth. Better candidates considered the usefulness a study carried out on a limited sample, and also that usefulness is increased due to factors such as higher ecological validity of studies

### Q2

This question asked for one theory of motivation, and Maslow was frequently the chosen theory. However to access the top band some reference to Maslow in the work place was needed, by illustrating needs with ex maples from the work place. Candidates did know the theories well, and a range of intrinsic/extrinsic, goal setting theories was also used effectively by candidates.

Section (b) concerned the difficulties of applying theories to the workplace, and this was (like the usefulness) often limited to individual differences. Better candidates considered the lack of practical suggestions inherent in theories, and the idea of one reductionist theory explaining motivation.

### Q3

Part A. Candidates tended to be able to write about appropriate psychological evidence although there was sometimes a lack of depth and or breadth. Answers sometimes tended towards interviews of various types and didn't consider other research which would have been covered by the specification. This may have limited marks, and also a lack of detail often kept answers out of the top band.

Part B. The evaluation tended to be difficult to apply to research and tended to be an evaluation of interviews which in some way limited the amount of evaluation or to a description of research on gender bias in interviews. This would attract little credit in a question asking about evaluation, although it is a valid point to make.

Part C. This required candidates to state how an airline might set about recruiting a pilot and the better answers related their suggestions to the specific requirements of pilots such as being able to react to emergencies; in relation to critical incident interviews. Psychometric testing was also

popular as a suggestion and again better candidates would give the rationale for this by relating to the specific requirements such as stable personalities, of pilots.

# Q4

Part A. In this question on interpersonal communications candidates had to be careful not to simply describe methods of communication without some psychological evidence on effectiveness or appropriateness. A description of emails or telephone conversations bordered on the anecdotal and so attracted little in the way of credit. Some candidates did however give detailed explanations on communication networks, as well as types of communication.

Part B. The evaluation tended to be formulaic and limited when there was little psychological evidence to evaluate. Anecdotal description of uses of communications such as emails was not creditworthy in questions requiring evaluation. It follows that the more psychological evidence described in part A the easier it is to apply evaluation issues with good examples.

Part C. This required the candidates to suggest a communication style for a complex toy design team. The suggestions were often pertinent to the situation and clearly described. The rational for using them in the specific scenario of the question was lacking in many answers. This part of the question may have been more difficult for weaker candidates who needed better knowledge of psychological research than they had shown in the previous two sections.

# **2547 Psychology and Environment**

# **General Comments**

The standard of entry for Environment was again generally good although a centre-effect was evident in that some centres were well prepared in the requirements of the mark scheme and others less well prepared. There were a small number of rubric errors and some candidates ran out of time usually failing to answer Section B part (c)

Section A part (a) was generally answered well although weaker answers tended to give anecdotal evidence or only brief details of research/theory. Performance in Section A part (b) was more variable. Stronger answers put forward three or four points and these were discussed in relation to research or evidence from the topic area. Weaker answers tended to make a number of points but without discussion or elaboration and/or not make points relevant to the topic area.

**Section B** - candidates were in the main well prepared for **part (a)** with most candidates citing a range of research/theory/evidence from the topic area, however weaker candidates often gave only brief details of research or used peripherally relevant evidence. There was more of a centre-effect for **part (b)** with some excellent detailed and evaluative answers from some centres using a range of issues, comparing and contrasting evidence and discussing this within the issue. Weaker responses either failed to bring in evidence to support the argument within an issue or showed little evidence of analysis. For **part (c)**, candidates were usually able to put forward good suggestions but then often failed to relate them to psychological theory or research or failed to give a rationale for the application.

### **Comments on Individual Questions**

Q No)

#### **Section A**

- (a) Describe one study investigating the effects of climate and weather on health – Questions on climate and weather are usually popular but the focus on health seemed to have caused difficulty for some candidates. A number of candidates cited a study on climate and weather and social behaviour – usually the horn honking or waitress tipping studies and therefore gained no credit. Most commonly cited research on health was Rosenhan on seasonal affective disorder (SAD).
  - (b) Discuss problems psychologists may face investigating the effects of climate and weather on health – This question was generally answered well with most candidates discussing a number of problems such as individual differences, methodology, ecological validity, etc. Weaker answers typically either only discussed one problem or failed to link a point back to the topic area.
- 2) (a) **Outline one explanation of crowd behaviour** this question asked for an explanation of crowd behaviour and therefore either a theory or piece of research/study was acceptable. Better answers described an explanation (e.g. deindividuation) and then linked it to a study usually Zimbardo (giving electric shocks) or Mann (jumping from a building).
  - (b) Contrast different explanations of crowd behaviour This question was generally not answered well however there were some excellent answers to this question with some strong candidates contrasting two or more different explanations/theories. However, weaker candidates tended to merely list different explanations without linking or discussing these explanations in any way.

# Section B

- 3) (a) Architecture and behaviour - these two Section B topics were answered with equal frequency. Candidates usually cited a good range of studies with better answers describing four detailed or three very detailed studies. Most popular were Newman and McCawley (eye contact) Milgram (handshaking or knocking at doors), Yip (urban/rural suicide rates) and the Pruitt-Igoe research.
  - (b) Some Centres were very well prepared for Section B part (b) answers with a good range of issues, selecting appropriate evidence for discussion and comparing and contrasting within each issue. Weaker answers merely listed points without developing an argument or discussing what effect this might have on the research evidence. A number of candidates evaluated each study individually making it more difficult to gain marks for analysis.
  - (c) Suggest design features for 'The Worst Place to Live' which would benefit the residents - some good suggestions based on relevant psychological research; most popular involved a communal area for socialising and socio petal seating arrangements. Also, many candidates suggested the area must be crime-ridden as it was the worst place to live and made suggestions on defending property in some way in order to reduce crime.
- Environmental cognition Most candidates were able to describe research (a) into cognitive mapping, way finding and the scenic environment and this section was generally answered well. Most commonly cited research was Lynch (5 common elements), Appleyard (gender); Maguire (2000) (London cab drivers); Tolman (rats) and for scenic environment – Kaplan and Kaplan, Berlyne, Ulrich.
  - (b) As 3(b)
  - (c) Suggest features of scenic environment for posters in new student common room - There were some innovative ideas for posters with most answers described natural scenes, sometimes with a survival element such as a hut for shelter and linked to Kaplan and Kaplan (1987). Many effectively linked natural landscape scenes back to Ulrich. However, some candidates seemed unprepared for a scenic environment application question and instead suggested elements to include on a map.

In both 3 (c) and 4 (c) candidates sometimes failed to discuss their suggestion in relation to the research/evidence/theory and therefore lost marks on the 'Application Interpretation: Reasons' section of the mark scheme.

4)

# 2548 Psychology and Sport

# 1. General Comments

The overall impression is of a paper of general comparability and consistency with recent years' examination papers. There was a good range of answers across the mark scheme. It clearly differentiated across the whole range of abilities. There were minimal rubric errors or timing difficulties. It seems that teachers have impressed the importance of not throwing away marks from section B with many candidates starting with this section and some even starting with section B part b! (This may be taking the tactic a little too far as the part b is an evaluation of the knowledge shown in part a). Previous reports have noted that when this strategy has been employed there was a need to emphasise that the third of total marks available in section A are still important. Finally, question 2 was more popular than question 1, but by no means better answered. Likewise, question 3 was more popular than question 4, but by no means better answered.

The evaluation questions (Section A part b and Section B part b) were the clearest means of differentiating candidates, so too was the candidates' ability to read and respond directly to the requirements of the question. Better candidates gave appropriate and detailed responses to questions. Weaker candidates fell short of this in the same areas as previously noted, in particular;

- i) Not responding precisely to the question.
- ii) Not locating answers in a sporting context. For example, describing research into personality (e.g. Freud's psychosexual stages of development) without referring to sport (Q2 (a)).

Most candidates referred to psychological theory, evidence and concepts, but to varying degrees of detail, accuracy and breadth. Once again, the evaluation sections were clear areas for differentiating the candidates. In section A (b) in particular there seems to be a tendency among weaker candidates to provide extended description and fail to provide much evaluative comment at all. A centre effect still prevails, with a clear distinction between quality of scripts from centres where students are well prepared and can develop evaluative and analytical comment with evidence. This is best achieved by comparing/contrasting by issue, but is by no means restricted to this approach.

# 2. Comments on Individual Questions

# Section A

**1(a)** This question provided a range of responses and a range in quality of response. Students either answered historically, for example with reference to Weiner, or referred to developments since the early days of attribution theory such as reference to fundamental attribution errors or learned helplessness. Weaker candidates seemed vague or confused beyond the basic premises of the theory.

**1(b)** The notion of usefulness was marked with the broadest of interpretations allowed, such as application to sport or usefulness to wider society. Many candidates appeared to be able to regurgitate certain phrases but not really appreciate what they were suggesting. It should be noted by teachers that the command goes beyond merely *identifying* the usefulness of attribution as it applies to sport, but requires a response to '*Discuss*...'

**2(a)** This was the more popular of the questions in section A. Many candidates were able to call on knowledge of research which was directly relevant and sports specific, most commonly Eysenck or Cattell. Too many candidates churned out theory without referring to the sporting context. Others outlined measures, for example, without directly referring to the theory.

**2(b)** Candidates clearly struggled with the notion of 'compare'. The worst answers merely churned out pre-learned evaluation comments with no understanding compounding their inability to address the question. Some evaluated one theory, then wrote a phrase such as "in contrast to this....." then evaluated another theory, hoping the examiner would draw the comparisons themselves maybe. Others did attempt to draw comparisons but the points made, or issues identified did not really compare at all. Only the strongest candidates seemed able to answer this part of the question convincingly.

# Section B

**3(a)** This was the most popular choice from this section. Weaker responses were rather listlike in their presentation of research into aggression and sport. This meant that answers lacked breadth or sometimes failed to refer to sport. Better answers were broader, were placed in a sporting context and clear understanding was demonstrated with "This shows that/This suggests....." type statements. Again elaboration and applied examples typified stronger responses.

**3(b)** As ever, the clearest section for differentiating candidates. Better candidates addressed all parts of the mark scheme, and were often noticeable by how well they located the evaluation in a context, such as the identification of the issue, locating it in relevant research, analysing it appropriately and making an effective case. Weaker answers failed to develop and elaborate upon their evaluation issues, or failed to include comparisons in their evidence. Most candidates, however, could identify relevant issues and relate evidence correctly. Some centres are well prepared, encouraging their students to analyse the issues in relation to research available. In some over-prepared centres, however, the same evaluation issues were regurgitated regardless of how relevant they were or how well that particular candidate could apply them.

**3(c)** Responses to these questions have noticeably improved. This particular question could be answered in various ways. The notion that a reduction in aggression is always desirable is challenged by this question. So suggestions on keeping athletes 'fired up' or not letting aggression levels tail off were acceptable ways to address the question. Equally, answers which referred to motivation, goal setting or optimal levels of arousal were equally legitimate responses to this question.

**4(a)** This part tended to be rather well answered. Candidates showed good breadth, usually managing to address both attention and imagery. There were less anecdotal responses which sometimes mark this section, and in particular the imagery responses are much improved.

**4(b)** Comments consistent with those for 3(b) above.

**4(c)** Once again, this question is seeing much improved responses, with candidates seeing a clear and practical link between what they learn in the classroom and what they can apply, in a real and practical sense, to the sporting context.

# 2549 Psychology and Crime

# **General Comments:**

The view of examiners overall was that the paper was set at an appropriate standard of difficulty. Section A was more challenging than section B. The biggest issue this year in terms of marking scripts was the increasingly poor handwriting (above poor spelling and grammar) affecting at least 20-30% of the scripts. This is making it very difficult to confidently award credit and in making the examiner work so hard to read their script, the candidate may be disadvantaging themselves even though examiners go to great lengths to try to 'translate' a script. In extreme cases centres should consider special arrangements but in general we may be seeing the effect of increasing time spent on a keyboard rather than with a pen in hand.

Candidates were generally well prepared for this session and had a lot of psychological knowledge to use to answer the questions although as detailed below there were some pitfalls. Weaker candidates really do not understand profiling and confuse it with identikit and they also fail to understand ID parades or what a jury's function or mode of operation is. Obviously, a huge amount of material has to be covered for this unit but it is quite clear that some centres are teaching psychology as a set of studies and not contextualising it in the criminal justice system. Timing was not usually a problem and there were very few rubric errors.

# **SECTION A**

**Question 1(a)** Theories of crime were confused with research/studies and hardly ever explained how the theory explained crime – only results were presented. Bandura, Lombrosso and Sheldon were very popular choices as was Farrington. Candidates who actually explained how the theory explained crime received higher marks, but such answers were rare. Candidates need to be clear about what constitutes a study and a theory (which is the bullet point being addressed here).

**Question 1(b)** The team of examiners considered that this was a straight-forward question. However, it produced a very disappointing response, and few candidates received top band marks. Most candidates compared two studies, or presented two theories side by side with a small amount of comparison or contrast at the end – usually related to nature vs. nurture, reductionism, usefulness or determinism. Unfortunately, few used a range of issues to make comparisons or contrasts.

**Question 2(a)** Strong candidates wrote about the UK or USA approach and used lots of terminology (interpersonal consistency, organised, disorganised, mental maps etc.). Weaker candidates presented a study on profiling, such as Copson, or presented a case study, such as John Duffy or failed to distinguish between top-down and bottom up approaches and cited the same evidence for each. The British approach seemed to be the best understood and gained the most credit from better candidates.

### Question 2(b)

A complete range of answers were seen for this, some that were very poor, just claiming that profiling helps narrow down the search (and nothing else) to ones that were very strong and very focussed on usefulness, citing evidence from Copson, Pinnizotto and Finkel, John Duffy Case, Kocsis etc. Quite a few also fell in the middle, where candidates presented one reason profiling was useful (usually John Duffy success) and one reason it wasn't (usually Rachel Nickell failure), which attracted mid-band marks.

# **SECTION B**

**Question 3(a)** Many weak candidates answered all they knew about courtrooms without much psychology. Some candidates knew some psychology about attractiveness effects and persuasion but presented it in an anecdotal way, without citing research specifically. There were also some candidates, however, who knew about a range of research that tapped the whole topic and each piece was clearly understood and related to the courtroom. Candidates often confused courtroom with testimony – this was credited as long as they had tried to apply the research to how it related to courtroom, e.g. Loftus and Palmer and leading questions.

**Question 3(b)** The strongest candidates presented issues that they then explained in terms of the topic area, and then presented evidence with comparisons and/or contrasts. Many candidates just identified issues, without defining them or linking them to the topic area/question and evidence was often not clear in how it related to the issue. One issue that was used inappropriately by many candidates here was validity – students claimed studies were valid if they found what they intended or if they found what they aimed to etc; without talking about the validity of measures used in the research. Some centres had taught their students 3-4 issues to use, which strong students could draw out and apply to the area, but many weak students just had sentences that were statements put together, rather than an evaluative discussion of the evidence.

**Question 3(c)** Most candidates did relatively well, scoring between 4 and 6 here. Plausible suggestions were given and based on psychology and the reasons behind them were sound, although not always in enough detail to show deep understanding. Weaker candidates tended to give very anecdotal suggestions. It was disappointing to see how few knew any specific research here even though this is addressing one bullet point of the section on the courtroom with even Asch's research on conformity being relatively rare.

### Question 4(a)

More students attempted this question. Most candidates seem to have cited Loftus and Palmer's study. Although the majority of candidates who attempted this question did well, and better on average than those that attempted Question 3, there were still a few candidates that had been taught general research about memory (Bartlett etc) who did not seem to understand how such research impacted on our understanding of witness testimony. Other weak candidates confused courtroom research with testimony – sometimes this was made relevant, but often it wasn't. Many, many candidates simply list the research without contextualising it into the process of testifying.

### Question 4(b)

This was better answered than 3(b), with appropriate issues being raised and research used more effectively to comment on how the issues affected research into testimony. Ecological validity and useful applications were very popular issues.

**Question 4(c)** This was better answered, with more psychology, than 3(c). Suggestions were usually about sequential line-ups, making sure foils wear the same clothes and not giving biased instructions. Suggestions were usually supported by psychological research and there was understanding behind them – quite a few top band marks were awarded to this question.

# **Grade Thresholds**

### Advanced GCE (Subject) (Aggregation Code(s)) June 2008 Examination Series

# Unit Threshold Marks

U	nit	Maximum Mark	Α	В	С	D	E	U
2540	Raw	60	41	36	31	27	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2541	Raw	50	33	29	25	22	19	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2542	Raw	50	41	37	33	29	26	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2543	Raw	80	62	56	50	44	39	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2544	Raw	50	36	32	29	26	23	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2545	Raw	50	39	35	31	28	25	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2546	Raw	50	38	34	30	27	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2547	Raw	50	36	32	28	24	20	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2548	Raw	50	39	35	31	27	24	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0
2549	Raw	50	38	34	30	26	22	0
	UMS	100	80	70	60	50	40	0

# **Specification Aggregation Results**

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	Α	В	C	D	E	U
3876	300	240	210	180	150	120	0
7876	600	480	420	360	300	240	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	В	С	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
3876	14.7	33.9	55.9	74.6	88.2	100.0	16089
7876	17.5	44.6	72.0	89.8	97.9	100.0	10527

### XXXX candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see: <a href="http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\_results.html">http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums\_results.html</a>

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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